

17 September 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: Project [REDACTED]

1. I realize that it is late in the game and that the project's approval, given the concurrences it has already received, appears to be a foregone conclusion. Nevertheless, since this is the first chance [REDACTED] has had for any input thereon, I should like to go on record as having serious reservations about the basic concepts underlying this proposal.

2. My reservations are as follows:

a. Contrary to previous election operations of any magnitude, the proposed subsidies will not be extended to a political party or other institutionalized mechanism with proven organizational capabilities. By and large, the subsidies will go to individual candidates in the absence of any real indication of how they will use the funds, and without any control over the manner in which the funds will be expended. Thus, there is no assurance that the candidates in question have available to them the institutional means for effective utilization of the subsidies or, even if so, whether they will in fact choose to use them for the desired purposes.

b. The candidates likely to be chosen for subsidization by us are presumably precisely those which our opposition intends to defeat. Presumably, therefore, our opposition will make a major effort (financially or otherwise) to elect their candidates. Consequently, the mere insertion of funds to individual candidates does not assure us of any positive results.

c. In a situation where the Ambassador chairs the election committee, it is he who will undoubtedly have the final word on what candidates are to be

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subsidized. I suppose one can feel fairly comfortable about Ambassador Korry's judgment, even though he certainly cannot qualify as an expert on Latin American affairs. However, with a change in Administration next January, it is entirely possible that a new Ambassador will be installed in Santiago long before the election in Chile comes off. If we are lucky, he will be sufficiently astute politically to make the kind of judgments which are essential for the proposed election project. If not, we are stuck with a selection mechanism counter-productive to the purposes of this project.

d. As presented, the project does not specify clear criteria for the selection of the candidates to be subsidized. In essence, it seems to boil down to whether they can be depended upon to be anti-Communist. Thus, even if the project is completely successful in terms of the election of the subsidized candidates, we might wind up with reliable anti-Communists - but, at the same time, with a bloc of parliamentarians who are all-out opponents of the very reforms which are a fundamental policy objective of the U.S. Government. The long-range negative consequences of such a situation, brought on in part by us, are obvious. In my mind, this represents a possibly fatal flaw in the project's concept.

3. More mundanely, and apart from the apparent lack of opportunity for operational follow-up [REDACTED]

[REDACTED], the project, as presented, seems to entail a more-than-normal flap potential. Assuming that a relatively large number of individual candidates are to be subsidized (anything less than that would make the project meaningless to begin with), the method of using [REDACTED] seems to raise more security problems than it solves: [REDACTED]

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4. In sum, the proposed project appears simple, both in conception and execution. I would maintain that it is deceptively simple and that it will come to haunt us sooner or later.

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